

Alejandro de Acosta

Joshua Beckman



Poem Summaries
vol. 2

Blaise Cendrars

Islands

A guy on a boat has a reverie about islands and gets so excited that he throws his shoes overboard.

Waking Up

A cologned writer on a boat rushes through life as he does on land.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Written at Rome

When vacationing, Americans should be on their best behavior.

Berrying

A man stuck in a bramble talks to himself contentedly as he snacks, and thus is not sad to be stuck in a bramble.

Philippe Jaccottet

Winter Moon

The poet offers gentle instructions for a hallucination.

I Walk

A morning stroll unfolds into a dental calamity.

Ben Johnson

Simplex Munditiis

Ben Johnson likes the girl next door.

To Celia

If “your kiss was in the cup” I’d like it more than even the best wine—and you smell like a floral arrangement. P.S. I mean it!

Edgar Allan Poe

To The River

Sometimes a man sees all the amazing beauty in the river and then sometimes, because his mind is elsewhere, he does not.

Sonnet to Science

It turns out that Science is unkind to the old myths, which is not so great for the poet. He wonders why.

The Conqueror Worm

Angels are excited for a play—but it turns out to be a horror show! A scary creature appears and eats the actors. In the end it seems the scary creature was the main character.

William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Using many analogies, an Englishman pretends to talk to his girlfriend about how special she is and experiences artistic satisfaction.

My love is as a fever, longing still...

A lovelorn fella feels sick when he realizes that love makes him crazy. But is *he* really the crazy one?

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind...

Infatuation leads a famous Englishman to spin his wheels, rendering him unable to distinguish mountain from molehill.

Max Jacob

Miracles Real Miracles

Despite his supernatural abilities, a clergyman remains concerned with the mundane.

Literary Manners II

A group of irreverent young poets disappoint a philologist of eastern descent.

Literary Manners I

In the streets of Paris, social etiquette is complicated when gangs of poets meet.

Lorine Niedecker

New-sawed

A Wisconsin woman *really* enjoys her chores.

July, waxwings

In the summer, small adorable birds, through their habitual feasting, accidentally create a colorful display on an unhealthy tree.

Swept snow, Li Po

Snowy weather and poetic contemplation of the weather makes a Wisconsin woman a little more Chinese.

Eugène Guillevic

Parallelogram

An introspective parallelogram talks about itself and shares its feelings.

Triangle

A somewhat self-assured three-sided polygon considers its universal appeal.

Lozenge

A despondent rhombus is dumbfounded by its own self-image.

Regular Hexagon

A six-sided polygon presents its cosmological origin story, replete with vanishing triangles.

Raymond Queneau

Toward A Poetic Art (9)

One evening a poet wrote a particularly shitty poem, and then made everyone wait to read it.

High Rise

A poet breaks the hard truth to a modern building, cataloging its grandeur and then explaining demolition.

The Concierges

A guy waits forever to take his walk, and, when he does, he sees the same woman and the same cat in the same doorway and so gets outta there.

Projectile

A bad poem can be made into anything and thrown into the air. But enjoy it while it flies, because the litter official will get you before long.

William Butler Yeats

Veronica's Napkin

An extremely brief mystery doesn't get past the first clue.

Three Movements

A well-read fisherman is distracted from his daily task by his nightly study.

Stream and Sun at Glendalough

Pulled away from his gazing, an Irishman returns to view the moon and feels younger.

Mad as the Mist and Snow

For a sheltering classicist, the value of literature seems diminished in light of inclement weather.

Robert Frost

Stopping by Woods on Snowy Evening

For no apparent reason, a man prolongs his already lengthy journey, much to the consternation of his horse.

A Minor Bird

Not dealing with the fundamental issue of his grouchiness, a man distracts himself with a bird.

The Pasture

A guy who wants help with his chores emphasizes the leisurely aspects of the chores to be done.

Nothing Gold Can Stay

A malcontent is unamused by nature.

Fire and Ice

Having discussed color, our malcontent goes on to perseverate on temperature differences.

Jacques Prevert

Birthday

A young Frenchman fondly thinks of his parents' love. He seems drunk, but he is yet to be born.

Off-Base

Having replaced his helmet with a bird, a gentleman finds out what a considerate bird it is.

Lost Time

Blissed out on his way to the factory, a worker enjoys the sunlight and then questions its maker.

To Paint the Portrait of a Bird

An ingenious Frenchman gives instructions on some surrealist techniques for getting cheap pets.

Familial

A quiet man drinks a cup of coffee. Witnessing this, a sensitive man becomes upset.

Robinson Jeffers

Salmon Fishing

A morbid hallucination ruins a leisurely fishing expedition.

Love the Wild Swan

A writing workshop is off to a good start with a brisk pep talk.

Rock and Hawk

A thoughtful man notes the coincidence of geological and ornithological phenomena on the California coast.

Carmel Point

Raising NIMBY to metaphysical levels, a prophetic voice announces the future fall of California real estate.

The Bed by the Window

A morbid Californian has big plans for a bed, but in the meantime he lets his guests use it.

Pierre Reverdy

False Door or Portrait

A writer sees his reflection and realizes he's having a bad day.

On Tiptoe

While attempting to overcome his defect, a clumsy man distracts himself with a bird conspiracy.

River

An amateur psychologist applies his knowledge to a body of water.

That Memory

A guy with a great memory accumulates a wealth of details, despite which he remains fixated on a single one.

A Lot of People

Nature acting like a clock seems not enough for our poet, who sends a man wandering after people only to find himself among their shadows in a kind of apocalyptic horror film.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Monday Rue Christine

As the week begins, a private investigator records all of the suspicious street-side conversations and enjoys himself so much he makes a poem.

Inscription for the Tomb of the Painter Henri Rousseau Customs Inspector

He makes a promise to a civil servant, but we'll never know if he kept it.

There

In an amorous reverie, he composes a peculiar catalog.

4 O'Clock

Dirtyly, he brags about his grooming, a sophisticated camouflage.

Hotel

Procrastinating, he experiences a strange hallucination.

Hunting Horn

Attempting to excuse forgetfulness, he evokes a literary crush.

Robert Browning

Love Among Ruins

I.

Lazy sheep wander around the pastures at night.

II.

A prince used to live there.

III.

Now it's flat and green.

IV.

The prince's guys were there too.
There used to be lots of excitement.

V.

Still it's flat and green,

VI.

Guys had their motivations

VII.

They barely left a thing

VIII.

Except for a part of a castle they used as a
dugout and an old forgotten hippodrome

IX.

As sun sets on the flat and green.

X.

A blonde appears but doesn't talk much.

XI.

The king's mind was on the game.

XII.

My mind was on the blonde.

XIII.

His game was war.

XIV.

My game was love.

[mufa :: poema]